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UNCLAS COLOMBO 002047

SIPDIS

KATHMANDU FOR BILL BERGER, OFDA REGIONAL ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [EAID](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: DISASTER DECLARATION - TIDAL WAVE IN SRI LANKA

1. Summary: Based upon an official request from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka and our assessment

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of the situation, the Ambassador declares that a state of disaster has resulted from the tidal wave that hit Sri Lanka on December 26, leaving at least 2000 dead, 200,000 homeless and 1 million persons affected. The Ambassador requests USD 100,000 under the Ambassador's disaster assistance authority to respond to the humanitarian needs created by this disaster. End summary.

2. A tidal wave hit coastal areas of northern, eastern, southern and southwestern Sri Lanka mid-morning on December 26, killing at least 2000 people, leaving 200,000 homeless and 1 million affected by the disaster. Foreign Secretary H.M.G.S. Palihakkara contacted the Ambassador the afternoon of December 26, formally requesting U.S. assistance. In particular, the Sri Lankan government is seeking U.S. assistance in disaster management. A United Nations Disaster Assistance team is expected in Sri Lanka on December 27. The Indian government is reportedly providing six ships and six airplanes to assist in search and rescue operations.

3. The Ambassador has been in contact with OFDA Regional Advisor Bill Berger by telephone to discuss the situation. Based on the magnitude of the disaster, Post requests USD 100,000 be made available for disaster assistance. Specific targeting of these resources will be determined in consultation with OFDA based on further assessment of need.

4. Based on the evidence above, I declare a disaster resulting from the tidal wave in Sri Lanka. The disaster is beyond the capacity of the Sri Lankan government to adequately respond, and provision of this humanitarian assistance is in the interest of the U.S. government.

5. Action for OFDA: Embassy requests OFDA provide immediate fund cite of USD 100,000.

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